

## SOME NEW BOOKS.

The eighteenth volume of the "Bankside Shakespeare" (The Shakespeare Society of New York) contains "The Life and Death of King John," with an excellent, though too brief, introduction by Appleton Morgan. Shakespeare's play is colated with a copy, in fac-simile black-letter, of "The Troublesome Raigne of King John," from which it was adopted, and thus a good opportunity is afforded of studying the genesis of those plays which Shakespeare made his own by the process of rewriting. Nothing is known as to the authorship of "The Troublesome Raigne." Mr. Morgan suggests that it may have been one of the latest examples of the transition from the morality to the drama. For this, however, we cannot but think it far too dramatic. It has in fact scarcely anything of the morality about it, being founded upon the chronicles, which it follows with positive servility. But the most interesting service to which this volume can be put is the observation of Shakespeare's methods in rewriting the old story. In one respect he changed the latter radically. In "The Troublesome Raigne" the anti-catholic feeling is displayed with extreme virulence. It is full of fierce vituperation of the Pope, the Cardinals, the Legate and all the monastic and conventional institutions and authorities in England. Now Shakespeare swept this away altogether, and barely alludes to the rumor that John was poisoned by the monks of Twynsted Abbey. Of course this has been used in support of the hypothesis that Shakespeare was himself a Catholic. The fact remains, however, that, as Mr. Morgan puts it: "So far as one may judge of Shakespeare from his dramatic works, he was a man who kept his religious opinions to himself, and strictly to himself." But most readers will be chiefly interested by the magic touches with which the master transformed the verbose, dull and clumsy language of the model into noble, vigorous and stirring speech, and the unerring tact and skill with which he seizes opportunities for fine effects, ignored by his predecessor. In no way, perhaps, is his genius more clearly exhibited than in this reconstruction, and the Shakespeare Society of New York is to be congratulated upon its enterprise in putting so useful and costly a volume.

Mr. Frederic Saunders, of the Astor Library, has compiled a neat little volume entitled "The Story of the Discovery of the New World by Columbus." It is taken from the accepted authorities, and, particularly in the part entitled "Estimates of His Character," brings together a choice of views which should satisfy the most exacting. Mr. Saunders' volume is well adapted to the use of such as have not time or inclination for the study of the full biographies of Columbus, whose name is legion, and it is very well printed by the publisher, Thomas Whitaker.

Charles Scribner's Sons have imported a new edition of Lord Chesterfield's "Letters," edited by John Bradshaw, M.A., LL.D. For the most part it follows Lord Mahon's edition of 1843. Five letters not known to the editor of 1843 have been added and some changes have been made in the arrangement of the letters to Philip Stanhope, not always, it seems to us, in the interest of the reader's convenience. When one considers the adverse opinions so continually expressed upon Chesterfield's letters to his son, the fact that a new edition of them should be thought worth while seems to indicate that there is still a sufficiently profitable audience for authors whose wits and brilliancy are in an inverse ratio to their morality.

The general soundness of the public literary taste is shown in the appearance of the eighth edition (Harper & Brothers) of Mr. Laurence Hutton's "Literary Landmarks of London." It has been carefully revised by the author, and as far as possible brought down to date. It has been rendered more valuable and interesting, moreover, by the addition of an uncommonly good series of portraits. Undoubtedly Mr. Hutton is justified in the expectation that these portraits "will give it new interest and value in the eyes of all lovers of London and of her literary annals."

G. P. Putnam's Sons have issued the fifth and concluding volume of the translation of Prince Talleyrand's Memoirs. It deserves to be said that this translation is better supplied with the portraits than the original French edition.

## New Publications.

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